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CORPUS CHRISTI CALLER

Feb. 16, 1957

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Approved For Release 2004/10/13 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000300360004-9

CIA Student Aid Exposure Hits U.S. World Influence

WASHINGTON — The United States government's efforts to counter Communist influence in the universities, press and trade unions of the world have been seriously hampered by the disclosure that the Central Intelligence Agency has been helping to finance the National Student Association since 1952.

The history of the CIA's aid to the association helps to explain both the policy and its embarrassing consequences. The first CIA aid to the NSA was negotiated in 1952 by William Denso, then president of the student organization. He is now U.S. aid director in Peru.

This is one of the awkward problems of the current controversy. For present government officials who were privy to the CIA - NSA financial arrange-

ments when they were students are now likely to be identified with the CIA by the Communists, even though they no longer have anything to do with the agency.

The reason for establishing CIA help to the student association, however, is perfectly clear. In the years immediately after World War II, the Soviet Union took the lead in trying to organize and propagandize the world student movement.

In 1946 when the first World Student Congress met in Prague the Communist delegations gained control of several key positions, and imposed the Moscow delegation's agenda on the meeting.

The first Soviet vice president of the International Union of Students, for example, was

Aleksandr Shelepin, who later became chairman of the Soviet state security organization (KGB). The American delegates to the first meetings of the International Union of Students first opposed any open break with the Communists, but after the Communists completed their conquest of Czechoslovakia in 1948, when many students opposed the coup, the Americans finally broke away from the IUS and organized their own student association.

From the first, however, the American students were hampered by lack of funds, while the IUS had enough money to put on world youth festivals, world rallies, conferences and forums, and regional conferences.

Against this sort of competition, the American student leaders were in trouble. Ironically, though they were opposed by the Communist leaders of the IUS as being maliciously conservative, they were opposed at home as being too far to the left. They were able to raise very little money for organization or transportation, though somehow left-wing American students managed to get funds to attend student meetings abroad.

It was against this background that the NSA officials approached the U.S. government in 1952 and received some financial help from the CIA, then under President Truman and director William (Wild Bill) Donovan.

In the last seven or eight years, the CIA is understood to have put up an average of \$200,000 a year for the NSA, which amounts to about 25 per cent of its annual budget. This was, of course, known to Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson.

The Senate committee that oversees the CIA was informed about the program. And other agencies also helped the NSA in special projects, among them, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Department of State, and the Agency for International Development.

The disclosure by Ramparts magazine of the CIA aid to NSA, however, created a problem for President Johnson. He is already under severe criticism among some elements on the nation's campuses. Universities have been criticized for accepting special research grants from the CIA.

Rep. Wright Patman, D-Texas, has been threatening to investigate the foundations of the country for years, and these latest disclosures are not likely to discourage his efforts in this field.

It is understood that Michael Wood, a fund-raiser for the NSA last year, who was subsequently fired, wrote a long memorandum for Ramparts magazine on the CIA connection.

When President Johnson was informed of the planned public disclosure, he asked when the program had started (1952) and ordered all such programs stopped. The official word here is that the NSA funding did in fact stop on Jan. 1.

The program, however, remains. The battle to influence the student leaders of the world continues, and there are no private institutions available to finance the American leaders. This was the problem that started the CIA program in the first place, and it still exists.

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Assoc.

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of Students